

Labor Problem May Delay HUD Money

Labor allegations against Schofield, Inc., contractor for the town's dam and reservoir project, may hold up Cohasset's final payment from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

According to a letter from Frederick Aufiero of SEA Consultants to Edwin Pratt, Superintendent of the Water Department, the Department of Labor has indicated that Schofield was found to have falsified payroll records and did not pay proper overtime rates in accordance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the Fair Labor Practices Act. Other charges were also made against Schofield concerning labor practices on the project. Aufiero stated.

The Department of Labor claims that Schofield owes \$124,000 in unpaid labor costs, the letter continued.

HUD accountant Paul Rosenstein said \$99,400 is being withheld from the town primarily because the town hasn't completed its final audit, and that Arthur Tonemi, also of HUD, recommended the final audit be completed before confronting whether Schofield's labor problems will continue to hold up the final HUD payment to the town, it was noted.

The letter pointed out the possibility that HUD could ask the town for an additional \$25,000 in addition to the \$99,400 already withheld to cover the \$124,000 in labor under payment by Schofield.

Pratt suggested last week that the town could go after Schofield's bonding company to cover the \$124,000 underpayment to relieve Cohasset of the responsibility.

Aufiero said Schofield has 30 days to respond to the charges, and if he fails to respond at the end of that period then the Labor Department would request that funds be transferred from HUD to the Labor Department for disbursement to those employees who were underpaid.

Aufiero said that if this were the case, Humphreys had indicated he would seek to obtain an injunction to stop the transfer of funds.

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